FOREIGN GOSSIP.

—No gold has been coined in England since the 13th of July, 1881.

—Eighty-eight Swiss convents contain 546 male and 2,020 female inmates. The aggregate wealth is 25,000,000 francs.

—The Victoria Cross is a special decoration for personal valor under fire in the British army, and, though it has occasionally been won by a lord, has never yet fallen to a prince of the blood.

—Miss Wade, a young English tourist, who went out sketching on Mount Epomeo, at Ischia, in Italy, was found at the bottom of a deep ravine. She died in the morning without being able to give an account of the accident.

—It will be fifty years next December since Mr. Gladstone entered Parliament, and his friends propose to celebrate the event as a jubilee. He was first returned to Parliament Dec. 13, 1832, and has been a member of every House of Commons since that time.

—An officer of the Sultan's bodyguard cut out the tongue of a boatman the other day because he charged him with keeping back part of his pay and said he would get it from him in the day of judgment. The officer boasted of his cruelty, expecting his rank to save him, but the Sultan ordered him to be punished "just like any other man."

—Lord Tollemache, who has great estates in Suffolk and Cheshire, seems to have solved the agricultural laborer difficulty. The laborers on his properties have excellent cottages, with half-acre gardens (the women do a good deal of the garden work), and three years ago, out of 300 cottages, 260 had cows. Now nearly all have cows.

—Bull fighting at Nimes reached a climax on a recent Sunday. The audience, dissatisfied at the tameness of the animals, threw their chairs into the arena. More than a thousand chairs were broken and all the barriers were knocked down. The police were helpless, and the spectators set fire to all the combustible material within reach so effectively that the fire brigade could scarcely put it out.

—On visiting a session of Parliament King Cetewayo was disappointed at not seeing Mr. Gladstone in paint and feathers; thought he ought to hold the Speaker's mace and rap the Home Rulers on the head with it when they obstructed proceedings; supposed the ladies in the gallery were the Speaker's wives; that the Speaker's chair was the throne, and the Speaker's big white horse-hair wig was that official's own hair.

—The great earthquake record of Mallet catalogues between 6,000 and 7,000 earthquakes between the years 1606 B. C. and A. D. 1842. Probably the most memorable of these is the terrible earthquake which destroyed Lisbon in 1755. With scarcely a moment of warning rumble, a violent shock came which overturned the city, and in six minutes 60,000 persons had perished and a portion of the town was permanently ingulfed at a depth of 600 feet below the surface of the bay. The shock was felt with greater or less severity over a great area, extending from the Baltic to the West Indies, and from Canada to Algeria. Humboldt estimates that a portion of the earth's surface equal to four times the size of Europe was affected.

Her Terrible Temptation.

A case of opium-eating, the circumstances connected with which are of a peculiarly sad nature, has been brought to light through the death of Mrs. Captain Bird, at East Twenty-sixth street, in New York City. Mrs. Bird was a native of Wilkesbarre, Pa., and was a member of one of the oldest families in that place. After the death of her first husband she came to live in New York with her only child, who is now a young lady, eighteen years of age. Very soon afterward she had a severe attack of malarial fever, and, among other remedies was given opium. Her brain was also affected. When she recovered the dread of what she had suffered impelled her many times, without any other cause, to keep a supply of the fatal drug within easy reach. The consequence was upon the slightest sensation of chilliness she took alarm and swallowed a dose of opium.

The habit formed rapidly, so that in a few months from the date of her illness she had so far yielded herself to the temptation as to indulge the desire to some extent once in twenty-four hours. Her object in coming to New York was to fit herself for the occupation of skilled nurse. With this view she labored at Bellevue and in the hospitals on Blackwell's Island, and in time succeeded in accomplishing her purpose to the fullest extent. The passion for opium increased with her progress, and in two years she was a slave to it. She knew very well what the result would be, but she was powerless to resist. Having charge of medicines that had been left by the doctors for their patients, she found no difficulty in securing as much as she wanted. She had previously been a woman of good physique, and for the first few years of indulgence in the habit none save a very critical observer could have noticed a change in her appearance which might not be accounted for by the accumulation of years, as she had then started on the way toward forty. Her eyes had always been bright and the opium stimulation did not seem to greatly increase their brilliancy. There was a difference in her manner, but that was considered to be the result of close confinement in the atmosphere of the sick room. She understood the laws of medicine sufficiently well to know that opium-eating required frequent dosing in order to in some degree counteract its influence, and, as a consequence, she was very deliberate in the use of cathartics.

Her position of nurse she maintained to the satisfaction of the physicians, and was working away with the utmost regularity, when she began to suffer from stomach discharges until it was feared that her recovery was hopeless. She was at that time employed at Bellevue Hospital, and the doctors bottled the matter for microscopic examination, as it was supposed that the membrane of the stomach had been thrown off. She recovered slowly, and promptly set herself the task of conquering the craving for opium. Having made a long visit to her old home, she returned to New York in fair health and took a position as nurse at Blackwell's Island. It was necessary to be very careful in handling medicines, so as to avoid the temptation of being left alone with opiates. All the help possible was given by the doctors, and she was getting along very well until she was called to attend a favorite sister during a severe illness, at Wilkesbarre. The sense of duty was so strong that she was obliged to go, but before starting she said she dreaded being put to such a test. Her fear was that she would be unable to resist opium if it should be prescribed for her sister. It was prescribed, and she found herself swallowing morphine pills with more desire than ever. The sister recovered, and she, Mrs. B., returned to her duties at the hospital, and secretly continued to take opium every day. While going to and from the island she made the acquaintance of Captain Bird, and they were married. Having previously resigned the position of nurse, she went to live in East Twenty-sixth street. At first she intended to have confessed to her husband that she sadly needed his help to enable her to triumph over her weakness, but she was reluctant to do so. At last a time came when she could hide it no longer. He saw her melt into a shadow and was much troubled, but did not suspect, until she finally made known to him the true state of the case. Some time previously she had shared her confidence with a lady friend, who had promised to stand by her in the final effort at release. She was very much emaciated, and sadly deficient in strength for such an ordeal, but she resolved not to live if it should be as an opium-eater. In the course of her terrible longing she had been known to frequently take as much as nine ounces at a time. Four ounces was her regular dose. The effort to give up the drug was attended by a horrible desire. Her stomach was frequently discharged, and she had ever increasing and most excruciating pain, which began in the region of the hips and moved upward in spite of fomentation, manipulation, blistering and cupping, finally reaching the brain and putting a stop to the sufferings of the victim. In reporting the death to the Health Board, the attending physician wrote upon the certificate: "Her fatal illness was the result of the opium habit of seven years' standing." In conversation with a *Mercury* representative, the Doctor courteously declined to say anything in reference to the case more than it was one possessing so many strange phases that in the interests of science he was desirous of having a post-mortem examination, but that the family would not consent to it. "As to the treatment of such cases," said the Doctor, solemnly, "physicians can do very little. The cure, if effected at all, must be by miracle. It is the Great Physician only who can still the craving of an opium-eater."
—*N. Y. Mercury.*

The Transit of Venus.

The work of getting ready for the transit of Venus goes on with increasing ardor as the time for the occurrence of the phenomenon draws near. At a moderate estimate nearly a hundred transit expeditions have either arrived at their destinations, are on their way thither, are diligently making ready for their observing points, or are strengthening their resources at home. American astronomers are perfecting their plans. The Commission having the arrangements in charge has been obliged to wait long for an appropriation from Congress to defray the expenses. But the starting points have been selected, and the leaders of the different parties have been chosen. There will probably be four stations in the southern hemisphere. One is at the Cape of Good Hope, under Prof. Newcomb; one at New Zealand, under Edward Smith, of the Coast Survey; one at Santiago, Chili, under Prof. Boss; and one in Santa Cruz, Patagonia, under Lieutenant Very of the United States Navy. Some of the stations in this country will be: Cedar Keys, Florida; San Antonio, Texas, and Fort Thorn, New Mexico. The directors will be Professor Hill, Harkness, Eastman of the Naval Observatory, and Professor Davidson of the Coast Survey.

Thus it will be seen that the United States will be worthily represented by some of her most famous astronomers, who will do valiant work for the cause. Photography is the weapon with which they will make their attack upon the sun, and the fairest of his family, and, if human skill can be relied upon, the sun himself will be made to record every feature of the transit. The French, who will observe at eight stations in the western world, depend upon contacts for their means of attack, as also do the English and Belgians, while the Germans hope to accomplish great things with the heliometer. The Germans thus far have selected two stations further north than those chosen by other foreign nations; one is at Hartford, Conn., and one is at Aiken, S. C. The uncertainty of the weather in the north temperate zone will prevent it from being extensively chosen as an observing locality, but some stations will be located there, in order to bring the observers at as widely separated points as possible. It is discouraging to think that at only half of the stations clear weather may be anticipated, and that this expenditure of time, labor, and means will be all in vain as regards half of the observers. But the other half will have their labors crowned with a brilliant success, that will make up for the disappointment of those who equally serve the cause, though they "only stand and wait," while the whole band of observers will be rewarded by the gratitude of the generations that will tread the earth during the one hundred and twenty-two years that must intervene before the year 2004, when another transit recurs—*Scientific American.*

—For ten years an Italian has been proprietor of a peanut and fruit stand at the corner of Montgomery and Washington streets, Jersey City, in front of a shoe store. At a sheriff's sale of the store on Wednesday the stock of goods and fixtures were knocked down to the peanut merchant, who promptly handed over the purchase money, amounting to over $1,000. He will continue the boot and shoe business in connection with the peanut and fruit business. His wife remarked that they had money enough left to buy another store.—*N. Y. Times.*

The Absurdities of Fashion.

Old Mr. Thistlepod climed up the broad stairway of marble and rosewood leading to the high-backed, Queen-Anne editorial rooms of The *Hawkeye*, yesterday morning. His heavy tread fell noiselessly upon the Pompadour velvet carpets, and as he sank into a costly escritoire the perfumed light fell through the stained glass *tant mieux* at the facade of the managing editor's *ebranlement de cuir*, touched the old man's face with a softened overmoulou, that seemed like an echo from the stately renaissance that looked down upon the walls. Carefully moving the elegant Louis Quinze *passe-partout* where the old man could not tip it over with his feet, if after his usual habit he should choose to rest them on the carved *mauvis sujet*, the editor asked the honest tiller of the soil how was crops in the Flint River country.

"Crops?" echoed the old man. "Well now I want to tell you about crops. Corn's all right, an' oats was better'n usual an' wheat just boomed, but you've got a crop of fools in Burlington that'll just lay over any other green thing that ever drawed the cows in the State of Iowa.

"Why, the town's full of 'em," shouted Mr. Thistlepod, who labors under the impression that he can't be heard unless he talks very loud.

"How can you tell they're fools?" asked the society editor.

"By their clothes," waved the old man, and the society editor slid as far as he could under the table and then laid his face flat on his arm in order to write more easily. "By their clothes," repeated the sturdy old agriculturist. "'Y gaul, if a boy of mine 'uz to dress like the young fellers I see in this town, I'd beat some sense into him with a neck-yoke. Why it's redik'lus; I tell ye, it's redik'lus. I see a young chap down in the countin'-room with a pair o' trousers on him tighter'n candle molds—I hope to die 'f I didn't think he'd stuck his laigs into a couple o' snake skins. 'N' his coat—by jockies, it wasn't hardly long enough to cover his suspenders; it wasn't, I swanny. 'N' it fit him closter than his undershirt, and his shirt-collar sawed his years every time he turned his head, 'n' he wore his watch chain outside his coat. An' he wore a flat hat, with a round top, about as big as a cooky. An' his shoes! P'inted, do ye know, p'inted like toothpicks, 'n' they was long as pickaxes. To see him skippin' around in that git up, lookin' more like a monkey nor a white man, 'y gaul, it made me mad, 'n' I swan I wanted to lick him. I declare I did. They's no sense in a Christian man makin' such an outlandish spectacle of himself, an' if I ever ketch my boy dressed up in any such a dog-goned redik'lus, absurd, disgustin' fashion, I'll be gaul swizzled if I—hello, Jasper, are ye waitin' for me?"

And saying good-by, Mr. Thistlepod accompanied his son down stairs to the wagon. As the old man turned to go, he did not in the least degree resemble the "young feller" down in the counting-room. The big felt hat he wore had originally been of some color, but that was years ago. The blue merino band sewed on with black thread was too loose, and a twine string tied tightly around it caused the hat to bulge out above the band like the dome of a mosque. The hickory shirt fastened at the collar in severe simplicity with a big horn button, scorned a collar of any kind. The roomy brown vest had four white bone buttons and a black shawl pin, and through the irregular reticulations of its much abraded back the solitary suspender showed through, resolutely clinging to a button aft and a nail forward. The baggy blue trousers swelled out below the flapping vest into an ample dome, strangely creased and fearfully wrinkled, breaking, as the old man walked, into awful billowy bulges and humps, while one long, deep, diagonal crease showed where the trusty suspender, hauled taut from port to starboard, held everything fast on the quarter. Further down they bagged in great curving billows at the knees and wrinkled behind; they were brief, and came to an untimely end about four inches before they reached the top of the shoe, and they ended abruptly; same size all the way down and sawed square off across the ends. The shoes were not exactly pointed at the toes, and when the old man's feet were not in them you could't bet which way the shoes were pointed. Jasper was attired in like manner as his father, only being a much taller man his trousers were correspondingly shorter. As they passed through the æsthetic decorations of the counting-room, the man in the lean pants laughed sneeringly, and Mr. Thistlepod laughed tauntingly. The managing editor sank back in his ermine cushioned *fleur de terre*.

"I am afraid," he sighed, wearily, "those two people are laughing at each other's clothes."—*Burlington Hawkeye.*

Respect the Body.

A writer in the *Hearth and Home* has some sensible ideas on the subject of bodily health. He says: "Respect the body. Give it what it requires, and no more. Don't pierce its ears, strain its eyes, or pinch its feet; don't roast it by a hot fire all day, and smother it under heavy bed covering at night; don't put it in a cold draft on slight occasions, and don't nurse or pet it to death; don't dose it with doctors' stuffs, and, above all, don't turn it into a wine cask or a chimney. Let it be 'warranted not to smoke,' from the time your manhood takes possession. Respect the body; don't over work, over rest, or over love it, and never debase it, but be able to lay down when you are done with it a well worn but not a misused thing. Meantime, treat it at least as well as you would your pet horse, or hound, and, my word for it, though it will not jump to China at a bound, you'll find it a most excellent thing to have—especially in the country."

—It is announced that Mr. "Tug" Wilson has gone home to England. A few weeks ago he made a small fortune by permitting the Hon. John Sullivan to pound him severely for half an hour, and, taking a fancy to the country where great wealth so surely waited upon honest industry, Mr. Wilson concluded to stay in America. Since then, however, Mr. Wilson's line of business has been interfered with by the authorities of New York and Philadelphia, and Mr. Wilson is discouraged.—*N. Y. Sun.*

Our Young Folks.

THE BEAUTIFUL LAND OF NOD.

Come, cuddle your head on my shoulder, dear—
Your head like the golden-rod—
And we will go sailing away from here
To the beautiful land of Nod.
Away from life's worry and hurry and flurry,
Away from earth's shadows and gloom,
We will float off together to a world of fair weather,
Where blossoms are always in bloom.
Just shut up your eyes and fold your hands—
Your hands like the leaves of a rose—
And we will go sailing to those fair lands
That never an atlas shows.
On the north and west they are bounded by rest,
On the south and the east by dreams.
'Tis the country ideal where nothing is real,
But everything only *seems*.
Just drop down the curtain of your dear eyes—
Your eyes like the bright bluebell—
And we will sail out under starlit skies
To the land where the fairies dwell.
Down the river of sleep our bark shall sweep
Till it reaches that magical isle
Which no man has seen, but where all have been,
And there we will pause awhile.
I will croon you a song as we float along
To that shore that is blessed of God.
Then, ho! for that fair land, we're off for that rare land,
The beautiful Land of Nod!
—*Ella Wheeler, in Harper's Young People.*

IN A PRAIRIE DOG'S HOUSE.

One day not long ago Mr. Thompson came rushing into my room in a high state of excitement, and after exchanging the usual greetings remarked, impressively: "I'm going to be a naturalist." "What is a naturalist?" I inquired; not because I didn't know, for, bless you! we people who write for the papers have to know everything; but Mr. Thompson had so many strange ideas, and so many new definitions for the words which he used, that I asked him to see if he knew. "What is a naturalist?" I said. Mr. Thompson looked solemn for a moment, rubbed his forehead, then answered, after much hesitation:

"A naturalist is—is—is—a—a—oh—a—um—a—one of those fellows who sit around and watch bugs and write what they know about them."

"Well, what kind of bugs have you been watching?" queried I.

"Prairie dogs and owls," he responded, promptly; then added, as he saw me smiling: "I don't mean that they are bugs; I used that term to represent the whole of animal nature."

"Ah! And what did you find out about prairie dogs and owls?" I inquired.

Mr. Thompson settled his cravat, and, choosing a more comfortable chair, with several preparatory "hems" began his story.

"While I was in the West last summer I stopped for a short time at a small town in Colorado to study the habits of the prairie dog. I wandered out one morning on the prairie and seated myself on a large mound in the midst of one of the dog villages. As I looked about me I noticed that in the mouth of each burrow sat its owner, gazing at me curiously, while on the top of several of the mounds sat small brown owls, regarding me in much the same manner as old Prof. Spilkins used to look at a new variety of insect. As I watched the owls I could distinguish likenesses to a number of my old teachers. And just as I had fixed upon one that looked like old President Bompton—you remember old Prex Bompton, with his long beard and spectacles—well, just as I had fixed upon an owl with long beard and spectacles"——

"But," I remonstrated, "owls don't have long beards and spectacles."

"They don't eh?" answered Thompson, angrily. "Have you ever seen a wild owl? Did you ever see them in their own homes? Do you doubt my word? Didn't I see the one that looked like old Prof. Euclid making squares and triangles and circles in the dirt? And one that I called Prof. Perry was digging a ventilating flue into his burrow, and an old owl that was the perfect image of Merill sung out to me to learn thirty-six analyses for to-morrow. I know what I'm talking about!"

"I have no doubt that you do. I merely interrupted you because I thought you were joking. I am sorry. Pray go on," said I, hastening to apologize.

"That's all right," answered Thompson, somewhat mollified. "Where was I? Oh! just as"— But his recollections of what had happened seemed to be so hazy, and his story was so disconnected, that I shall not try to follow his method of relating it, but will merely give you the facts as nearly as I can remember them.

Mr. Thompson was sitting opposite to a large mound, watching the owls, when out of the mound stepped an immense prairie dog, who seated himself facing Mr. Thompson. He gazed at Mr. Thompson severely, moving his head from side to side, as if in deep meditation. As he sat upright on his hind-quarters, with his fore-paws drawn up in front of him, he looked so much like a terrier dog in the attitude of begging that Mr. Thompson was about to throw him a piece of bread, when he cleared his throat with a pompous "hem" and remarked: "What is your errand in our city?"

Mr. Thompson was somewhat surprised, but he answered that he was traveling in search of information; that he had heard much of the prairie dogs and their wonderful villages, and that he was curious to learn more of them from personal observation.

The prairie dog eyed him closely. "You have no gun?" he asked, distrustfully. Mr. Thompson replied that his visit was not to injure or to destroy but to become acquainted with them.

"A most commendable ambition," responded the prairie dog, graciously; "and as Governor of our city I welcome you; only," he added, "I beg of you not to call us dogs; we are marmots, and have no resemblance to dogs except in our short, sharp note of alarm, which is somewhat like the yelp of a spaniel."

Mr. Thompson promised to remember, and the Governor continued: "In order that you may pursue your investigation intelligently, I will first show you through my mansion;" as he said this he turned a somersault and dove head first into his burrow. Mr. Thompson followed his example. He says he does not remember whether he was transformed, for the time, into a prairie marmot, or whether he had simply grown small enough to be enabled to enter the burrow without difficulty; at all events he followed the Governor along an inclined corridor, arched at the top and extending downward about four feet at an angle of forty-five degrees. They then came to a hall that was perfectly level and about five feet long, then up another incline of about two feet. "This," said the Governor, "is in order that the water may not penetrate into our sleeping apartment." At the end of this corridor was a large circular chamber, the floors and walls of which were covered with dry grass. Here lay the mother marmot and three young ones. After Mr. Thompson had been introduced to her, and had complimented her on the beauty of her family, the Governor led the way back into the open air. He seated himself on top of the mound and motioned Mr. Thompson to a seat beside him. After a short pause Mr. Thompson spoke:

"I would like to ask you about the owls. Is it really a happy family, as some writers assert, or do they feed upon your young?"

"We are about as happy as most families composed of persons of different tastes and pursuits," answered the Governor. "The owls live upon grasshoppers and bugs of different kinds; they rarely if ever eat our children. In return for the accommodation we give them they guard the entrance to our homes, and in the winter we often find it very convenient to have the youngsters tucked in among the soft downy feathers of the owls. They have lived with us for so long a time that they have adopted many of our manners; for exampie, their cry is not like that of any other kind of owl, but more closely resembles our shout of alarm; they also fly in the day as well as at night, though they cannot see so well in the glare of midday as the gray of morning or evening."

While Mr. Thompson and the Governor were talking the surrounding mounds had become covered with little prairie dogs, ench one watching him curiously.

"Well, about the rattlesnakes; are you also at peace with them?" inquired Mr. Thompson.

The brow of the Governor darkened.

"Yes," he answered, "the peace of the weaker and the stronger; such a peace as exists between the unprotected traveler and the armed highwayman. They enter our homes, devour our young, and if we attempt to resist they strike us with their murderous fangs. Oh that every one of them might be exterminated!" Just then a sharp rattle sounded in the grass. Mr. Thompson jumped up in alarm. His sudden movement threw consternation among the inhabitants of the village; a warning yelp, and fifty little brown forms were seen to leave their mounds, throw a somersault, and disappear in their burrows. Mr. Thompson grasped his cane, and with a few well-directed blows killed the rattle-snake. Cutting off the rattles he turned again to his friend the Governor. He was nowhere to be seen. He says, however, that he thinks he saw him give an approving nod from the mouth of his burrow.

Mr. Thompson finished his story and turned to me inquiringly.

"Didn't you fall asleep and dream it?" I ventured to suggest.

"Dream it! Oh yes, I suppose I dreamed it; and I dreamed that I killed the snake, and I dreamed that I cut off its rattles, and you dream that you see them now," he almost shouted as he drew the rattles from his vest pocket and shook them vigorously. "I suppose that I dreamed it all; but if I did there is more truth in it than in half the stories about animals, and I'm going to be a naturalist." So saying he flung out of the room in high dudgeon.

After he left I looked into some very learned books and found that his description of the prairie dog's house was correct; still, despite the accuracy of the description and the snake's rattles which he so triumphantly displayed to attest the truth of his story, I think he dreamed it; don't you?—*Allan Forman, in Christian Union.*

The Whipping-Post in India.

A Parliamentary paper has been issued containing extracts from a letter from the Government of India to the Secretary of State for India on the punishment of Indian criminals by whipping. From a tabulated return it appears that the number of persons flogged in 1880 in Madras, Bombay, Bengal, Northwest Provinces, Punjaub, Central Provinces and British Burmah was 28,300—the largest proportion being in the North-west Provinces, where the number of criminals whipped in the year mentioned was 10,200. The returns, however, from every district show a diminution, compared with those of the previous six years. The most striking feature in the returns is the great increase in the number of persons whipped which occurred in most provinces during the years 1877-'79, when scarcity and agricultural distress were more or less prevalent. This remark is especially applicable to the Madras Presidency and to the Northwestern Provinces. It appears that a circular was issued by the Supreme Government on September 21, 1880, addressed to the local Governments, and the replies "disclose a practical absolute unanimity of opinion as to the propriety and necessity of retaining whipping as a form of punishment in India," and in this opinion the Supreme Government concurs. Due discrimination, it is stated, should be exercised in awarding corporal punishment and in respect of the manner of its infliction, but if this condition is fulfilled, whipping is, for various reasons, a suitable form of punishment for Indian criminals. The Indian Government, however, suggests various modifications in the infliction of the punishment, such as that magistrates of the second class should only be able to order the infliction of whipping when specially empowered by the local Government; that whipping should be prohibited when the offender is over forty-five years of age; that the permissive use of the cat instead of the rattan should be withdrawn; that the size of the rattan should be regulated by law, and that the court ordering the punishment should be required to decide in each case whether its infliction should be in public or in private.—*London Telegraph.*

—It is estimated that the "lambs" of this country annually risk $80,000,000 through the New York Stock Exchange. No wonder the brokers get rich.—*Iowa State Register.*